

Section 7.—Weights and Measures.*

The object of weights and measures administration is to maintain uniformity and accuracy in the use of the legal standards of the country in industry and commerce, to protect the public from short weight and measure and the trading community from unfair competition arising from such practices.

Prior to Confederation, the administration of weights and measures was in the hands of each Provincial Government but passed to the Dominion Government in 1867, under Section 91 of the British North America Act. Steps were then taken to simplify the standards in use and to establish uniformity throughout the Dominion.

What might be termed the principal Weights and Measures Act of Canada was passed in the session of 1872-73; its provisions closely followed English weights and measures law, but the system of weights and measures was greatly simplified. This Act established as the primary legal standards for Canada the imperial pound, gallon and yard, but in place of the system of stones, quarters, hundredweights (112 lb.) and the long ton (2,240 lb.) it provided a decimal series of weights, 1, 2, 3, 5, 10, 20, 30, 50, 100 lb., and the short ton of 2,000 lb. The only exceptions to this were the continued use of the old French land measure, the arpent, in Quebec, and the use of the long ton (2,240 lb.) in the coal-mining industry, but not for the retail sale of coal. The troy ounce of 480 grains and its decimal submultiples are the legal weights for the weighing of gold and precious metals. The metric system is legal for all transactions.

Many changes, deletions and additions have been made to the Act of 1873 by later legislation, but its principles remain unchanged. The latest legislation is the Weights and Measures Act (c. 212, R.S.C., 1927).

The Weights and Measures Service was first administered by the Department of Inland Revenue, and offices were opened in all the principal centres of Canada and equipped with standards and inspection equipment. In 1918 the Service was transferred to the Department of Trade and Commerce. For purposes of administration, the Dominion is divided into 18 districts, each in charge of a district inspector. The chief rules of administration are as follows:—

(a) Every new type of weighing and measuring device must be submitted to the Department at Ottawa for approval before being placed on the market.

(b) Every new machine must be inspected and stamped by an inspector before being sold or taken into use.

(c) Imported machines are held by the customs until release is approved by the nearest inspector.

(d) All inspections take place on the traders' premises, except where devices are brought to the inspection offices.

(e) Fees are charged for inspection and stamping, the schedule being defined by Order in Council, and all moneys so collected are paid into the Consolidated Revenue Fund of Canada.

The following table is a summary of the articles and machines inspected in the fiscal years ended Mar. 31, 1933 and 1934. The total revenues collected by the Service in the fiscal years ended 1933 and 1934 amounted to \$394,222 and \$399,717, respectively, while the expenses, including salaries, totalled \$306,158 and \$236,667, respectively.

*Revised by E. O. Way, Director of Weights and Measures, Department of Trade and Commerce.